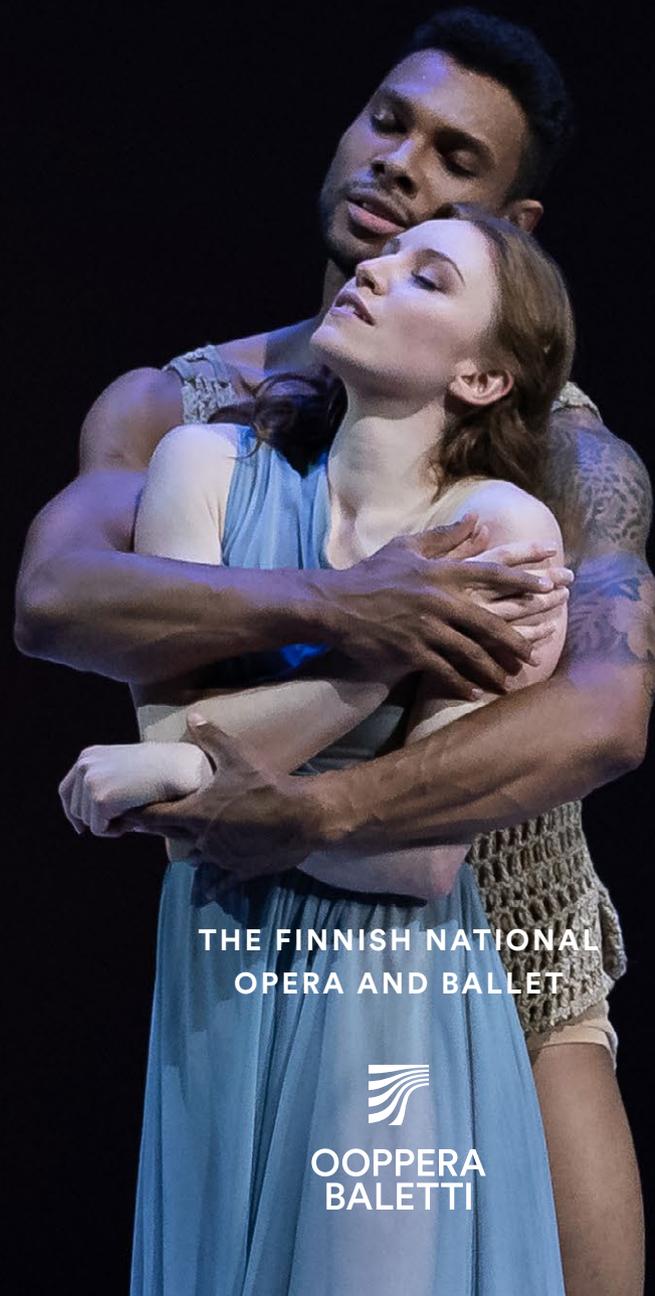


ANNUAL REPORT

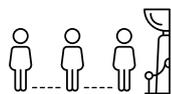
2021



THE FINNISH NATIONAL
OPERA AND BALLET



OOPPERA
BALETTI

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Repertoire

This is an abbreviation of the Annual Report 2021, available in Finnish
oopperabaletti.fi/talo/hallinto

”

Preparing for a new role is always a long process. Now that it's for Tosca, it's even more exciting. It's a dream come true for me to make my role debut as Tosca, let alone at the Finnish National Opera."

CAMILLA NYLUND

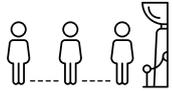


The Finnish National Opera and Ballet in a nutshell

The Finnish National Opera and Ballet is a national cultural institution with the key purpose of offering emotional, high quality opera and ballet experiences to audiences of different ages and backgrounds from across Finland. We are both compelled and driven to develop and renew traditions and expertise in our field.

Fuelled by creativity and virtuosity, the Finnish National Opera and Ballet wants to be at the forefront of the arts. Besides inspiring national pride, we aim to build a significant international reputation for our opera and ballet performances and other pursuits. What's more, we seek to constantly increase and broaden our contribution to societal responsibility.

The central values of the Finnish National Opera and Ballet are artistic excellence, collaboration, and sustainability. We strive to maximise the efficiency of all our operations.



THE SECOND YEAR
OF COVID-19

A hard spring and an action-packed autumn

We started the year 2021 optimistically, confident that performances could be resumed during the spring season. As official restrictions extended the break in performances until late spring, however, we cancelled the entire spring season at the end of March. The premieres for which we had already completed rehearsals were postponed. Though the cancellations were a disappointment, in the light of the circumstances we survived the spring relatively unscathed. We rehearsed several premieres and had only a small number of COVID-19 cases amongst our personnel. The government's third COVID-19 support package of 2.3 million euro in June was important to us, and we're very grateful for it.

The launch of our autumn season received extensive media exposure. A week before the premiere of *Cavalleria rusticana and Pagliacci*, the Regional State Administrative Agency announced new restrictions regarding safe distancing and dividing the auditorium into sections. After careful consideration, we concluded that complying with them fully would be impossible, and that they were unlikely to improve the effectiveness of our existing safety protocols. Subsequently we decided to rely on the latter and allow the premiere to go ahead. On the eve of the



“The full auditoriums of the autumn season proved that visitors feel safe at the Opera House.”

premiere the inspector of the Regional State Administrative Agency sanctioned our safety measures. This official stamp of approval for an industry-appropriate safety protocol was a great relief not only for us but also for the entire performing arts scene.

Though our audience numbers were still restricted in the early autumn and we had strict safety measures in place throughout, we had an amazing autumn season. We sold an impressive amount of season tickets, and our occupancy rate was over 90%. This shows both how much our arts had been missed and how extremely committed our customers are.

I would like to issue my most heartfelt thanks to our personnel for their flexibility and tenacity, to our customers for their loyalty, and to our Board of Directors and Supervisory Board for their unfaltering support in the second year of COVID-19.

Gita Kadambi, General Director

Having to cancel all our performances of the spring season meant significant changes to our repertoire. As we had already twice postponed the second part of the *Ring* tetralogy, *Die Walküre*, we decided to postpone the later parts, too. The rescheduling brought about conductor changes, too. Hannu Lintu started as our Chief Conductor earlier than previously announced, on 1 August 2021, and he will now conduct all the remaining *Ring* productions. *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* and *Cavalleria rusticana and Pagliacci* were moved to the autumn season and *Swan Lake* was rescheduled for the spring 2022 season. Performances of *Madama Butterfly* and the contemporary dance evening *Triple Bill – World Wide Dance* were cancelled completely.

Our autumn season started on 20 August with the premiere of *Cavalleria rusticana and Pagliacci*, followed by a wealth of other performances. Restrictions on audience numbers were lifted at the start of October. The season comprised a total of 134 ticketed performances, which were seen by 97 297 visitors.

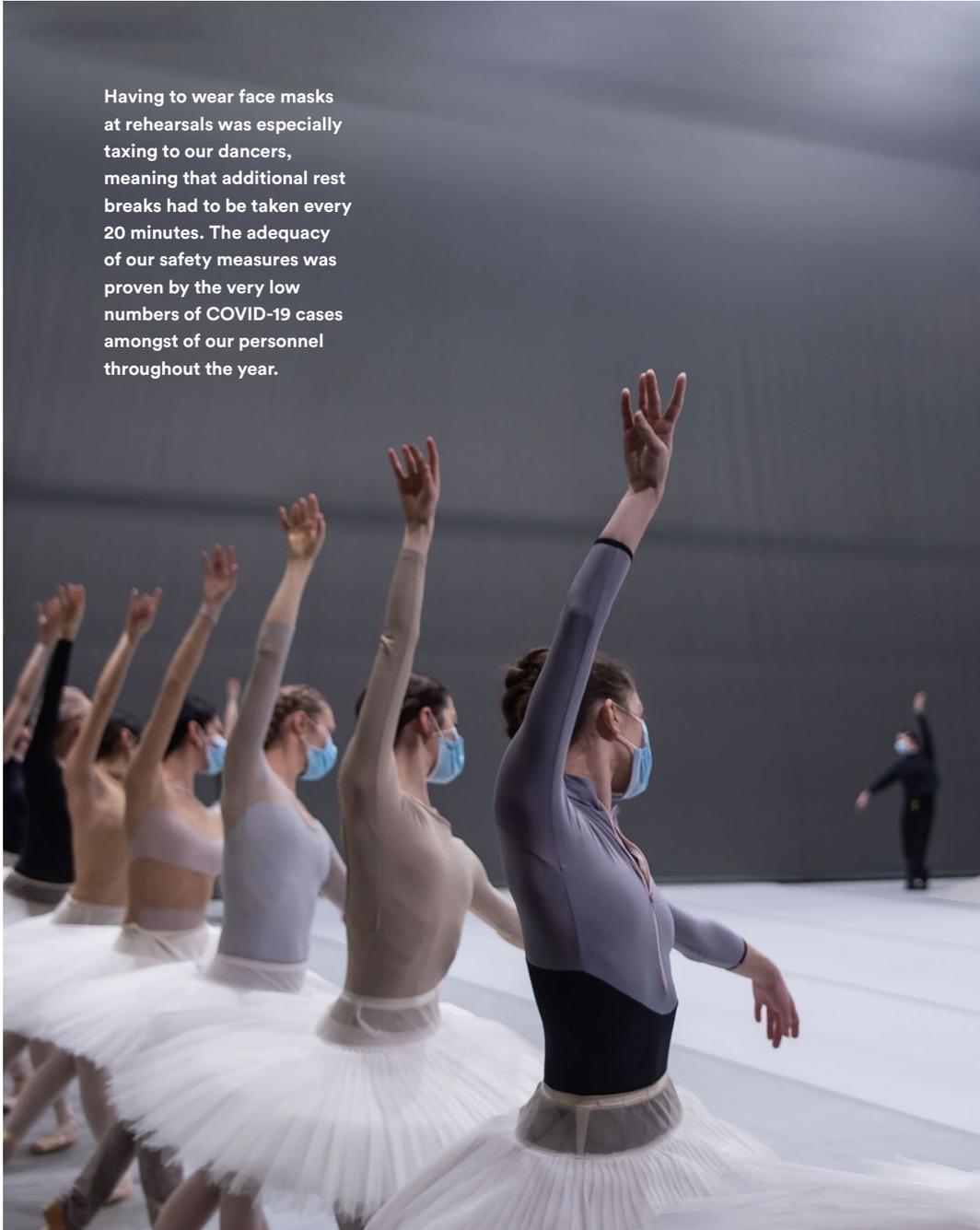
A working group launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2020 to examine the judicial and financial position of national cultural institutions submitted a proposal in August for drafting a law on government transfers to national arts institutions. We sincerely hope that this proposal results in a legally sanctioned status and funding for national cultural institutions. A stable and predictable financial base would ensure the continuation of these organisations' valuable efforts to uphold high quality national culture and support overall well-being within the society.

Further details of our autumn repertoire can be found online at encore.opera.fi/en

Occupancy rate in the
autumn season was over

90%

Having to wear face masks at rehearsals was especially taxing to our dancers, meaning that additional rest breaks had to be taken every 20 minutes. The adequacy of our safety measures was proven by the very low numbers of COVID-19 cases amongst of our personnel throughout the year.



The Phantom of the Opera has been performed at the Finnish National Opera a total of

98
times

and it has already enraptured more than

131,000
visitors.



The Phantom of the Opera

The Association of Finnish Theatres selected us for the Theatre of the Year 2021 award for our important contribution to the performing arts industry's efforts to ensure COVID-19 safety. The award was received by General Director Gita Kadambi, Production and Technical Director Timo Tuovila and Security Manager Samuli Nuutinen.





WHAT THE FUTURE
HOLDS

New developments across the board

Though the coronavirus pandemic did not allow us to return to normality just yet, we worked hard throughout the year and focused our development efforts on strengthening our future operational capacity.

Introducing creative reinforcements

In August, we had the honour of welcoming our new Chief Conductor, **Hannu Lintu**, to the Opera House. He was previously the Chief Conductor of the Radio Symphony Orchestra, where he worked from 2013 to 2021 to widespread international acclaim.

Javier Torres López was selected the new Artistic Director of the Ballet in October. His extensive knowledge of classical ballet and contemporary dance is complemented by more than 30 years' experience as a choreographer and teacher in various leading ballet companies and educational institutions. Torres will start in his new role on 1 August 2022.

Digital arts remain centre stage

Our aim is to be a pioneer in the use of digital technologies in the field of performing arts. The *Opera Beyond* project, which explores opportunities offered by new technologies, continued with a collaboration with the computer festival Assembly. This involved an open concept competition to encourage the creation of innovative digital arts. The immersive and interactive elements of the winning concept will enhance our circus-themed Main Stage production, which will premiere in 2022.

As part of the *Opera Beyond* project, we are also developing a virtual stage environment, the XR Stage

Design tool. It combines the various digital production tools needed in a performance into a single operation platform, which enables a large share of the production work to be completed in advance.

We have started the technical and visual revamp of our website in order to further improve our customer service and the user experience of first-time visitors. We also want to increase the amount of visitors to our Stage24 live streaming and video platform.

What's more, we have begun the gradual implementation of the OperaERP system for time tracking and production planning. The system will be fully operational across the organisation by the end of 2022.

Focused on future-proof facilities

During the year we completed several alteration and major renovation projects within the Opera House facilities to improve our efficiency and the experience of our visitors. The Ballet School of the Finnish National Ballet moved premises from Sörnäinen in East Helsinki to the Opera House in early 2022.

Large warehouse spaces within the building were converted into three ballet rehearsal rooms as well as new dressing rooms and a break rooms. The move allows the Ballet School to collaborate even more closely with the professionals of the Finnish National Ballet.

The Almi Hall was renovated with the help of a government transfer, complete with new furniture. We also finished the first stage of the refurbishment of our hair, makeup and costume department. Planning was started for the mechanical engineering renovations of the Main Stage, scheduled for 2023.



Cavalleria rusticana



"After many symphonic years, I am very excited by the opportunity to focus on one of the finest and most challenging achievements of the arts: the symbiosis of music, words and the stage," Chief Conductor Hannu Lintu enthuses.

600,000

page loads of Stage24.fi

Our Stage24 live streaming and video platform broke another record in visitor numbers. Our newly started collaboration with Arte Opera Season will bring international performances to Stage24, too.

"It is an honour to be chosen for this role. The appointment is a huge show of trust, but it also comes with responsibility. I will do my utmost to ensure that every employee at the Finnish National Ballet, the Ballet School, and the entire Opera House, can take pride in this decision," Artistic Director of the Ballet Javier Torres comments on his recent appointment.



Stage24.fi

As the restrictions on performances at the Opera House continued in 2021, we invested heavily in the digital availability of opera and ballet.

1.2 million people reached digitally



Delicious and varied refreshments make an opera or ballet experience complete. From autumn 2021 our restaurant partner is Food&Events.



In the Limelight: Ystävyys kuin meri

In the Limelight Presents: The music theatre group of 2–16 year-olds worked together with professionals to ideate and create the performance *Ystävyys kuin meri* (Friendship like the sea), based on the themes of the opera *Peter Grimes*. The digitally produced performance is only available to watch online via the Stage24 platform.



RESPONSIBILITY

A central part of our value base

One of our four strategic values is responsibility, which comes naturally given our public funding. Its central tenets are financial and artistic responsibility to the society, responsibility for our personnel, and environmental responsibility.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY means continually striving to improve our operational efficiency, increase our self-financing ratio, and invest responsibly.

In 2021 we started the implementation of our holistic time tracking and production planning system Opera-ERP, which will be completed during 2022. We planned and prepared for the early spring 2022 move of the Ballet School to the Opera House. The move integrates the educational institution more effectively to the Finnish National Ballet, and the two will both greatly benefit from the synergy.

In terms of increasing self-financing, it is crucial for us to keep hold of our current audiences as well as finding new audiences. COVID-19 has highlighted the

importance of reaching audiences digitally online and via our mobile app and newsletter.

ARTISTIC RESPONSIBILITY involves embracing our duty of serving the entire Finnish society and fostering the development of opera and ballet arts within the country.

To continue serving our audiences throughout Finland even during the temporary closure of the Opera House, in 2021 we invested heavily in offering performances digitally. Our live streaming and video platform Stage24 reached another record-breaking audience, with nearly a million live or recorded performances watched.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELL-BEING OF OUR PERSONNEL is of utmost importance at an art institution like ours. We want to be a good and inspiring workplace, which offers opportunities for continuous self-development and supports well-being and safety at work.

As in the year before, our human resources efforts focused on guaranteeing the occupational health and safety of our personnel.

We also made preparations for implementing the EU Whistleblower Directive, which will enable our employees to safely and anonymously bring to light any breaches of EU laws that they witness at work. The system has been put in place and we will start using it as soon as the national legislation is made consistent with the directive.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY is about recognising and minimising the environmental footprint of our operations, for example by embracing digitalisation, improving our energy efficiency, and choosing environmentally friendly materials and recycling them.

In 2021 we had the combined carbon footprint of our operations calculated for the first time. Moving forward, this will help us:

- Invest resources in genuinely effective ways
- Monitor the effectiveness of our measures
- Develop environmentally sustainable operations
- Aim for a leading role in environmental policy and action
- Map out the need for potential carbon compensation

We have also drafted a new environmental policy, in which we pledge to be an international pioneer in developing sustainability in the field of performing arts and aim for carbon neutrality as soon as possible in the light of our resources.



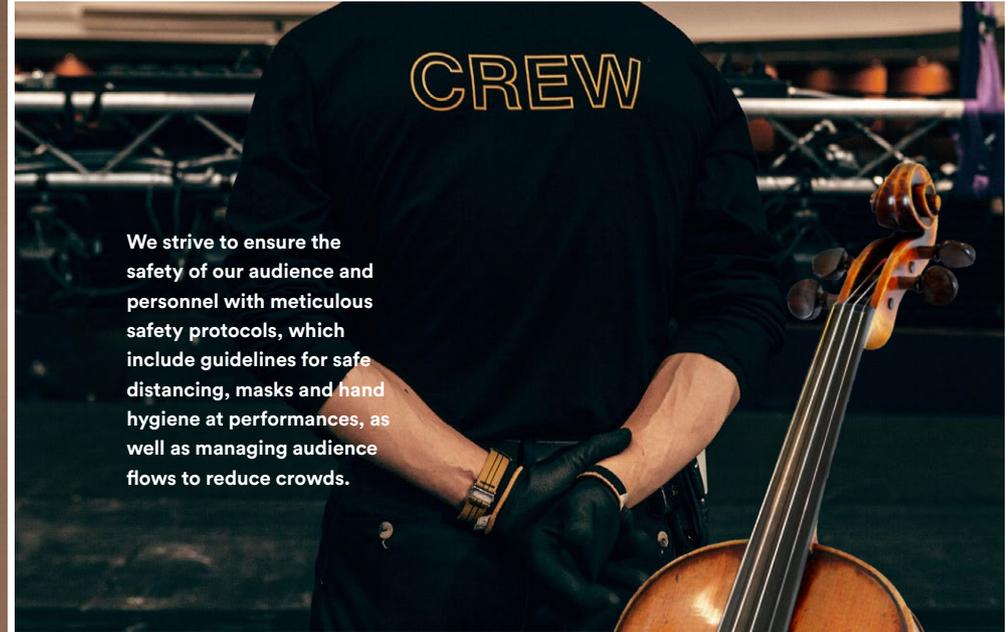
THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

Over the course of 2021 we assessed the importance of the UN Sustainability Goals to our operations. We then chose five key goals to which we can particularly contribute. In the future we will create metrics to monitor our progress. These will also lay the foundations for further developing our sustainability reporting.



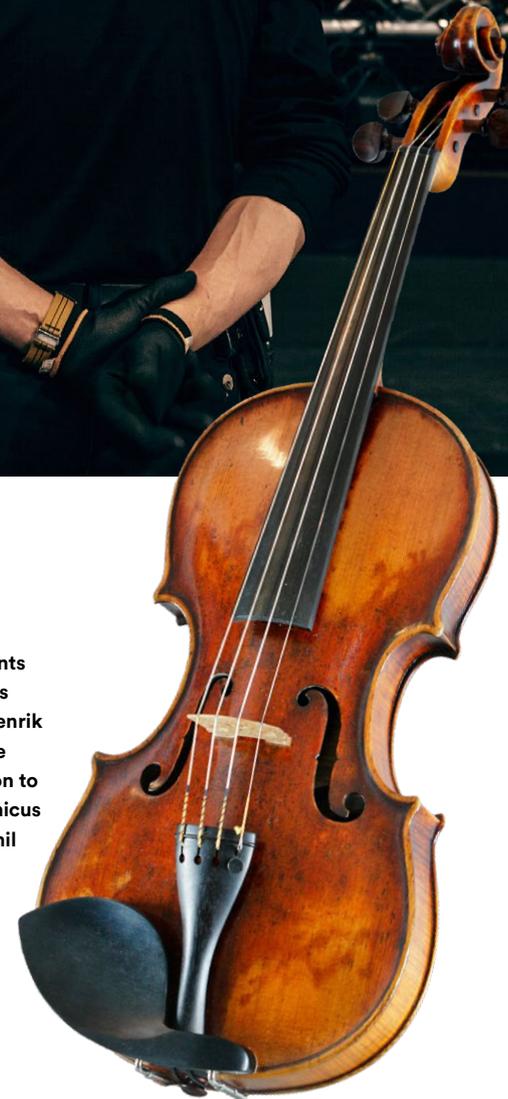
In autumn 2021 we launched a public fundraising campaign, which continues until the end of 2022. The campaign to fund ballet shoes for dancers carries on our public fundraising work started in 2016. The ballet shoe campaign also marks the centenary of the Finnish National Ballet in 2022.

SUOMEN KANSALLINEN
EST. 1922
100
BALETTI



We strive to ensure the safety of our audience and personnel with meticulous safety protocols, which include guidelines for safe distancing, masks and hand hygiene at performances, as well as managing audience flows to reduce crowds.

The number of valuable instruments in our custody grew by two violins over the last year. Hannele and Henrik von Wendt's donation enabled the Opera and Ballet Grant Foundation to purchase a violin made by Domenico Montagnana around 1740. The Emil Aaltonen Foundation provided us with a violin by the Italian artisan Giovanni Battista Guadagnini from the mid-18th century.





La Traviata



Cavalleria rusticana



Tosca



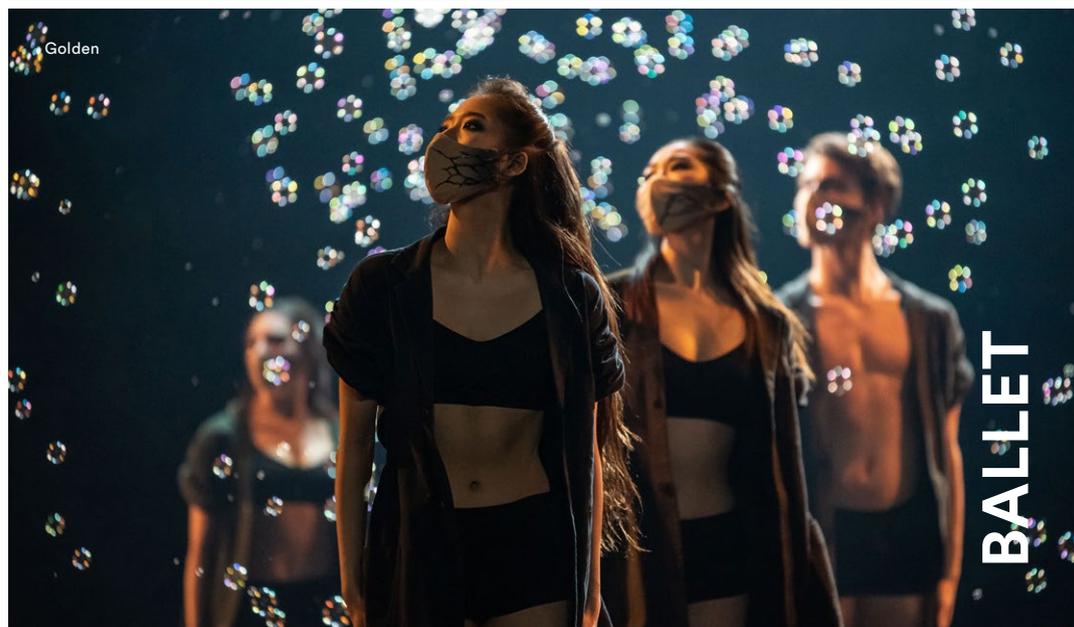
The Phantom of the Opera



Pagliacci

For information about the repertoire in 2021, see encore.opera.fi/en

OPERA



FINNISH NATIONAL OPERA AND BALLET

Helsinginkatu 58, P.O. Box 176
FI-00251 Helsinki, Finland
tel. +358 9 4030 21

COMMUNICATIONS

tel. +358 9 4030 2329,
press@opera.fi

www.oopperabaletti.fi/en
firstname.lastname@opera.fi

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EDITORS

Katja Jokinen, Anne Lepistö,
Ulla Paavola, Anita Prusila,
Liisa Riekkö (Finnish National
Opera and Ballet)

EDITOR AND LAY-OUT

Elina Kaartinen,
Sanna Rantakoski,
Outi Kiviluoto
(Avidly)

PHOTOS

Stefan Bremer,
Veikko Kähkönen,
Jonas Lundqvist,
Roosa Oksaharju,
Reetta Pasanen,
Ilkka Saastamoinen,
Anton Sucksdorff,
Emma Suominen,
Heikki Tuuli

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Spartacus
Photo: Roosa Oksaharju

TRANSLATION

Ink Tank / Anna Kurkijärvi-Willans





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